

# SPECIAL EDUCATION (M.A.) ONLINE

## Program Overview

The Master of Arts in Special Education, a **30 credit online program**, is designed to prepare certified teachers to teach students with special needs in a variety of settings.

The program provides opportunities for students to understand the nature and causes of disabilities, become familiar with agencies and resources for persons with disabilities, and learn the best practices and materials for teaching students with disabilities. This knowledge base, combined with a variety of shared and individual field-based experiences, provides opportunities for teachers to develop their expertise and become confident in their ability to work with students with special needs and become leaders in meeting the challenges of diverse classrooms. This program is offered completely online. Some courses may have remote asynchronous meeting schedules. Students are reminded to check specific course schedules during registration.

## Curriculum Overview

The M.A. in Special Education program comprises a sequence of coursework that includes courses required for a New Jersey Teacher of Students with Disabilities Endorsement. Candidates who are successful in the Teacher of Students with Disabilities Certification Program may apply their credits toward the M.A. in Special Education.

For individuals who are currently prepared to teach in general education settings, a 30-credit course sequence is designed to strengthen their preparation to meet the needs of all children, particularly those with disabilities. Students who currently hold a regular New Jersey instructional certificate in another field and successfully complete the program will be eligible for the New Jersey Teacher of Students with Disabilities Endorsement.

Those who already hold New Jersey Teacher of the Handicapped or Teacher of Students with Disabilities (TOSD) certification, may be eligible for up to nine credits waived depending on prior course work and transcript review. A total of 30 credits in graduate work is still required to receive the M.A. degree.

## Degree Offered

- M.A. in Special Education

## Contact

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**Program Website:** Special Education (<http://www.rider.edu/academics/colleges-schools/college-liberal-arts-education-sciences/school-of-education/graduate-programs/teacher-education-programs/special-education-programs/>)

**Associated Department:** Department of Graduate Education, Leadership, and Counseling (<http://www.rider.edu/academics/colleges-schools/college-liberal-arts-education-sciences/school-of-education/graduate-programs/>)

## Related Programs

- Teacher of Students with Disabilities Certification (<http://catalog.rider.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/education/programs-certificates/teacher-of-students-disabilities-certificate/>)

The **Special Education Master of Arts** is a complete on-line remote course of study.

(30 total credits)

## Teacher of Students with Disabilities Coursework

(21 credits)

Candidates entering with an undergraduate degree in education and teacher certification will be required to take the following courses. SPED 512 is the prerequisite for all other courses.

Code	Title	Credits
SPED 504	Assistive and Augmentative Technology for Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Disabilities	3
SPED 512	Psychology of Exceptionality	3
SPED 514	Applied Behavior Analysis for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other Behavior Needs	3
SPED 524	Collaboration and Inclusive Practice for Students with Mild and Severe Disabilities	3
SPED 531	Assessment for Instruction in Special Education	3
SPED 536	Instruction and Transition for Autism and Severe Disabilities	3
SPED 539	Instructional Practices for Students with Disabilities	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>21</b>

## Additional Courses for Special Education (M.A.)

(9 credits)

Code	Title	Credits
EDUC 500	Introduction To Research	3
SPED 542	Literacy and Students With Special Needs	3
SPED 590	Professional Seminar in Special Education	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>9</b>

## Additional Courses for Special Education M.A. with Reading Specialist Certification

(9 credits)

All additional courses for this certification can be completed online.

Code	Title	Credits
LITR 501	Psychology and Pedagogy of Literacy Processes	3
LITR 502	Curriculum, Instruction and Supervision in Literacy	3
LITR 504	Diagnosis and Correction of Literacy Abilities and Challenges: Seminar and Practicum	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>9</b>

## Graduation Requirements

- Meet the general master's degree requirements.
- Successful completion of all academic and field requirements.
- Completion of 30 graduate credits with a minimum GPA of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale.
- Successful completion of a required sequence of field experiences.
- Candidates must successfully pass a comprehensive examination covering knowledge and skills related to the field of special education.
- Successful demonstration of professional dispositions and behavior.

### **EDUC 500 Introduction To Research 3 Credits**

This course will provide students with the tools to evaluate the claims and uses of research related to teaching, counseling, and psychology. Students will learn how to find and critique the literature, and will be able to conduct some of their own basic evaluative research to assess the efficacy of their practice and programs. At the conclusion of the course, students will have developed an understanding of rigorous research and evaluation design, and will have skills in data analysis and interpretation.

### **LITR 501 Psychology and Pedagogy of Literacy Processes 3 Credits**

Studies the communication process from a componential point of view, including language acquisition and development, perception, comprehension and cognition, composition, and language systems. A review of the literature in each area as well as a survey of models of reading and language is included.

### **LITR 502 Curriculum, Instruction and Supervision in Literacy 3 Credits**

Reading and literacy pedagogy for ALL learners, gifted, average, and diverse learners is the course content. Current strategies for teaching comprehension, composition, vocabulary, language study, and independence skills are learned in a workshop setting. How to manage literacy instruction through content areas for all aged children in mainstream classrooms is studied. Parent education and inservice training are also included in course content.

### **LITR 504 Diagnosis and Correction of Literacy Abilities and Challenges: Seminar and Practicum 3 Credits**

Studies reading/language arts abilities and challenges and assessment measures. Observational techniques and diagnostic teaching for assessment are stressed. Students will apply concepts learned in seminar to their associated practicum/field experience.

### **SPED 504 Assistive and Augmentative Technology for Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Disabilities 3 Credits**

This course will emphasize the use of assistive technology, augmentative communication modalities, visual supports, and related instructional methods and strategies that maximize the learning of individuals with autism spectrum disorders and other exceptional learning needs. Students will learn how to effectively customize materials and adapt learning environments using technology, with a specific focus on individuals with ASD. Students will become familiar with the use of high-tech, low-tech, and no-tech solutions that support the individualized needs of learners. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

**Prerequisite(s):** SPED 512.

### **SPED 512 Psychology of Exceptionality 3 Credits**

This course provides opportunities for the study of school psychological issues associated with supporting students with exceptionalities. Philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education, and the characteristics of students with disabilities will be examined. Special education policy, legal foundations, and evaluation procedures are discussed. Current issues related to inclusive practice and intervention strategies are examined from a psychological and sociocultural perspective. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting. This course, or its equivalent, will be the prerequisite for all other SPED courses.

### **SPED 514 Applied Behavior Analysis for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other Behavior Needs 3 Credits**

This course is designed to provide extensive knowledge and practice in meeting the behavioral challenges of individuals through Applied Behavior Analysis for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other behavioral issues. Candidates will receive instruction in a problem-solving approach to identify the possible function(s) of problem behavior and the design of proactive, positive behavior intervention plans that emphasize the teaching of appropriate alternative skills. An emphasis is placed upon behavior change strategies, which intervene on antecedent events, teach appropriate alternative skills, and provide supports in the natural environment. Multi-component interventions also are designed to include the interest and preferences of the target student. Legal and ethical considerations are considered. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

**Prerequisite(s):** SPED 512.

### **SPED 524 Collaboration and Inclusive Practice for Students with Mild and Severe Disabilities 3 Credits**

This course will emphasize curriculum planning, learning environments, materials, and modifications for students with mild and severe disabilities. Instructional and behavioral strategies to maximize learning of all students, including those with exceptional learning needs in the general education classroom will be examined. Inclusive educational practices including collaboration, communication and positive behavior supports and co-teaching will be discussed and applied for diverse learners. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

**Prerequisite(s):** SPED 512.

### **SPED 531 Assessment for Instruction in Special Education 3 Credits**

In this course, standardized and functional assessments are emphasized. Students are introduced to basic educational assessment procedures, norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, and individually-referenced assessment in this course. An emphasis is placed on gathering information to answer specific referral questions, and the use of assessment tools, which meet legal and ethical guidelines. A model of academic assessment most consistent with classroom practices is emphasized. Students are expected to measure an individual's performance (e.g., current level of functioning) and provide recommendations for instruction and learning goals and objectives. A field experience will enable students to apply knowledge to practice.

**Prerequisite(s):** SPED 512.

**SPED 536 Instruction and Transition for Autism and Severe Disabilities 3 Credits**

The course will provide students with the knowledge and skills to support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and those with moderate to severe disabilities. Strategies to address instruction, transition, behavior, and communication and will be emphasized across domains of life skills, inclusion, and transition. Transition planning, including understanding, formulating, and implementing the Individual Transition Plan will be taught. Collaborative interactions with school and community personnel and agencies will be addressed. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

**Prerequisite(s):** SPED 512.

**SPED 539 Instructional Practices for Students with Disabilities 3 Credits**

This course will give students the opportunity to evaluate, select, develop, and adapt instructional and assessment materials for individuals with mild to severe disabilities. Using various case studies, students will have the opportunity to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and synthesize assessment information to make appropriate instructional decisions addressing learner characteristic and classifications. Curriculum planning, learning environments, modifications, and materials for diverse learner needs will be examined. Students will experience the collaborative process and develop their ability to function as part of an educational team. A field experience with children with disabilities will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

**Prerequisite(s):** SPED 512.

**SPED 542 Literacy and Students With Special Needs 3 Credits**

The course will provide an overview of theories, assessment, and intervention techniques for the literacy development of students with special instructional needs. Students will explore research validated methods for literacy development and instruction, including current strategies for teaching comprehension, composition, vocabulary, and language study. Management of literacy instruction is studied in a workshop setting. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

**Prerequisite(s):** SPED 512.

**SPED 590 Professional Seminar in Special Education 3 Credits**

This course addresses the current issues in the field of special education. Students will synthesize research and literature from the field of special education to address current issues and practice. Collaboratively, students will examine one area of special education through research and presentation. A reflective comprehensive view of special education including assessment, instruction, inclusive practice, assistive technology, Autism Spectrum Disorder, behavior, literacy etc. will be shared. Students are expected to complete a comprehensive exam in these related special education topics and submit 100 hours of supervised field hours. This course should be taken in the final semester of the MA program as it is the culminating reflective course of study.

**Prerequisite(s):** Permission of instructor.